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EDITOR'S TABLE.

THE late meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science while less numerously attended than some others, was a larger gathering than has sometimes represented it. The meetings of the Association cannot be as large relatively to our population as those of most of the European nations, because of the longer distances which the members are compelled to transverse in order to reach them. Many of the most active workers must always be absent in the field during the summer months, especially so long as our country presents such opportunities for original research. The summer schools take away some members. The meeting at Buffalo was held in such a way as to discourage the attendance of those who regard it as merely an opportunity for junketting. The meetings extended from Monday to Friday inclusive, and Saturday only was reserved for excursions. This arrangement was greatly to the advantage of work, the maintainance of interest, and of the attendance. The members present were more than usually conspicuous as workers, and the number and value of the papers read was fully up to the best standard.

The Association decided to meet in Detroit at the unusually early date of August 9th, next year. This date was fixed on account of the approaching meeting of the British Association at Toronto on August 18th following. A cordial invitation from the citizens of Toronto to take part in the reception of the British Association was accepted, and this will follow the meeting at Detroit.¹ A respectable minority of the Association thought that we should suspend our meeting for that year, or meet formally for organization only, and then adjourn to take part in the reception of the British Association. This view carried the Nominating Committee, but was not approved by the Association. That the Association did wisely there can be no doubt, and the circumstance shows that all the wisdom in that body is not concentrated in its representatives in the Nominating Committee. The reasons put forth by the Committee for its action were plausible, but were believed to be fallacious by a large majority of the Association. One of these reasons was the assumption that the American Association meeting would necessarily be neglected by its members if the British Association meet in Toronto. The Association thought otherwise, especially as it was remembered that the second largest meeting ever held was in

¹ Not however by special adjournment as stated in *Nature* of Sept. 17, p. 480.

Philadelphia in 1884 when the British Association met in Montreal. As the American Association knows its own mind, we may look for one of our largest meetings in Detroit in 1897.

IN our issue for October, 1895, we referred to the organization of the Field Museum of Chicago as having failed to furnish a successful basis of operations for the prosecution of original research. At that time most of the men who could give reputation to it had left, owing to the unsatisfactory positions in which they found themselves placed. Subsequently the establishment of publications of a very meritorious character induced us to believe that proper steps had been taken by the management to place the scientific men on such a basis as to insure the future prosperity of the enterprise. Authentic information recently received shows that this anticipation was premature. Other resignations have occurred, and the institution is evidently destined to be a failure unless a reorganization is effected.

Men who have spent their lives in mercantile pursuits are generally unacquainted with the conditions necessary to original research in science. The *modus operandi* in the two pursuits is fundamentally different. An element of tentative experiment enters into the pursuit of science, which requires a degree of freedom on the part of the investigator which cannot be accorded to the regular employee, the results of whose work are always susceptible of full anticipation. The investigator must have full control of material of research and of the ways of getting it. In fact no one else is likely to know how to get it. He alone knows the profitable lines of work; hence he must be permitted to select his work. No one will secure a museum sooner than he, and it will be as much more valuable than can be created by any one else, as the work of an expert is necessarily more important than that of other persons. For these and many other reasons no museum can become great unless its administration is in control of scientific experts, who should be responsible to each other and to the trustees only. With an organization of this kind, composed of the class of men from whom it has already selected some of its aids, there is no reason why the Field Museum, under the liberal terms of its endowment, should not rival the greatest museums of the world.

—WE must again remind contributors to the *NATURALIST* that proofs of all kinds and blocks of engravings must be sent to the publishers and not to the managing editor. Failure to observe this rule often causes inconvenient delays. Manuscripts, on the other hand, should go to the appropriate editors, and not to the publishers.